

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 /020 W
-----052242Z 070027 /46

R 051610Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5905
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L 4582

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT UR
SUBJECT: LEADERSHIP TIDBITS: BREZHNEV'S HEALTH, STATUS OF USTINOV
AND KATUSHEV

REF: (A) MOSCOW 4397, (B) STATE 62686

1. BREZHNEV WAS SHOWN ON SOVIET TELEVISION APRIL 4 DURING
THE FILMED ARRIVAL AT VNUKOVO AIRPORT OF FIDEL CASTRO
THAT DAY. BREZHNEV'S FACE SEEMED LESS SWOLLEN THAN WAS
THE CASE WHEN HE MET WITH THE SECRETARY MARCH 30, ALTHOUGH
THERE APPEARED TO BE AN UNUSUAL AMOUNT OF FLESH UNDER HIS
JAW, AND THE FLESH ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HIS FACE APPEARED
TO BE DEEPLY LINED AND SAGGING. AS WAS THE CASE DURING
HIS MARCH 30 APPEARANCE, BREZHNEV'S HAIR SEEMED MORE GREY THAN
USUAL. HIS GAIT DID NOT SEEM ABNORMAL, ALTHOUGH AS
HE WALKED HIS UPPER TORSO SWAYED FROM SIDE TO SIDE MORE
MARKEDLY THAN WE HAVE RECENTLY NOTICED. HIS VOICE WAS
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NOT CARRIED DURING THE TELECAST.

2. ON USTINOV'S STATUS (STATE 62686) WE RECENTLY ASKED
OLEG SOKOLOV, CHIEF OF INTERNATIONAL SECTION, USA DIVISION,
MFA, IF USTINOV WERE STILL IN THE SECRETARIAT.
SOKOLOV REPLIED, WITHOUT HESITATION, THAT USTINOV WAS
STILL A CC SECRETARY. WE SHALL MAKE FURTHER INQUIRIES

AS APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITIES ARISE.

3. OUR EASTERN EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES SEEM DIVIDED REGARDING KATUSHEV'S PRESENT STANDING IN THE LEADERSHIP. THE ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR TELLS US HE IS INCLINED TO SEE KATUSHEV'S RECENT MOVE AS A PROMOTION. A POLISH DIPLOMAT TOLD US HE THOUGHT KATUSHEV'S APPOINTMENT AS CEMA REPRESENTATIVE AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MARKED A PROMOTION, AND THAT KATUSHEV PROBABLY WOULD BECOME A CANDIDATE POLITBURO MEMBER IF HIS NEW CEMA POSITION MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO DEVOTE THE NECESSARY TIME TO HIS CC SECRETARIAT DUTIES. WE HAD ALSO HEARD SPECULATION THAT CC DEPARTMENT HEAD AND CLOSE BREZHNEV ALLY K.V. RUSAKOV IS SLATED TO REPLACE KATUSHEV IN THE SECRETARIAT (THIS RUMOR MAY BE BASED ON FACT THAT RUSAKOV WAS ONLY SOVIET OFFICIAL TO SIT INON BREZHNEV'S MARCH 17 MEETING WITH POLISH POLITBURO MEMBER AND CC SECRETARY OLSZOWSKI).

4. KULAKOV'S IMAGE WAS BROADENED A BIT BY HIS HEADING THE LIST (AS GIVEN IN PRAVDA MARCH 25) OF SENIOR PARTY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHO ADDRESSED STUDENTS OF THE HIGHER PARTY SCHOOL.

5. FINALLY, GIVEN THE FACT THAT GROMYKO'S HEALTH CURRENTLY SEEMS EXCELLENT, WE WERE SOMEWHAT SURPRISED WHEN THIS PERSONAL PHYSICIAN, A DR KULAKOV, TURNED UP UNANNOUNCED AT THE SECRETARY'S MARCH 30 LUNCHEON FOR GROMYKO.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HEALTH, INFORMATION EXCHANGE, BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, TELEVISION BROADCASTING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MOSCOW04582
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770118-1056
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770487/aaaacxsq.tel
Line Count: 98
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 431defa9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 MOSCOW 4397, 77 STATE 62686
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2894537
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEADERSHIP TIDBITS: BREZHNEV'S HEALTH, STATUS OF USTINOV AND KATUSHEV
TAGS: PINT, UR, US, (BREZHNEV, LEONID I), (USTINOV, DMITRIY FEDOROVICH)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/431defa9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009